Claims

[c1] 1. A soccer goal assembly comprising:

a soccer goal including a pair of spaced apart upright posts and a cross post extending between the uprights posts,

each of said posts presenting a generally forward and sideward facing playing surface; and

a goal pad removably wrapped at least partly around at least one of the posts to overlie the playing surface,

said goal pad comprising an elongated body presenting a longitudinally extending slot defined between opposed longitudinal edges,

said body being formed of a compressible and resilient material that provides impact-cushioning along the playing surface and permits resilient flexing thereof so that the edges are resiliently separable to receive the at least one post within the slot as the goal pad is installed or removed,

said pad being devoid of structure extending across the slot for securing the edges relative to one another, such that the body is self-retained on the at least one post.

[c2] 2. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 1,

said posts being similarly shaped and dimensioned.

[c3] 3. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 2; and

at least one additional goal pad on one of the other posts, said at least one additional goal pad being similar in construction and function to the first-mentioned goal pad.

[c4] 4. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 3,

each of said goal pads being received on a respective one of the upright

posts.

[c5] 5. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 1,
said at least one post presenting a cross-sectional post shape,
said goal pad presenting a cross-sectional pad shape that closely conforms with the post shape.

[c6] 6. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 5,
said post and pad shapes being orthogonal.

[c7] 7. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 5,
said post and pad shapes being circular.

[c8] 8. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 5,
said post shape being elliptical, and said pad shape being circular.

[c9] 9. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 1,
said at least one post presenting longitudinally extending, generally oppositely facing front and rear sections, with the playing surface being defined at least in part by the front section,
said goal pad overlying the front section and projecting rearwardly therefrom.

[c10] 10. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 9,
said at least one post presenting longitudinally extending, generally oppositely facing side sections that are defined between the front and rear sections, with the playing surface being defined by the front and sides sections,
said goal pad overlying the side sections.

[c11] 11. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 10,
said goal pad extending at least partly across the rear section, with the

slot being positioned along the rear section.

[c12] 12. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 1,
said at least one post presenting a maximum cross-sectional width dimension and an outer periphery about which the goal pad is wrapped,
said body comprising a wall that presents a generally tubular cross-sectional shape with a central opening in which the at least one post is received,
said wall extending at least about 75% around the outer periphery of the at least one post,
said wall having a maximum thickness that is less than about 50% of the maximum cross-sectional width dimension of the at least one post.

[c13] 13. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 12,
said maximum thickness of the wall being about 5/8 of an inch.

[c14] 14. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 12,
said body being formed of a foam material,
said foam material having a Bashore Resiliency Test value of at least about 35.

[c15] 15. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 14,
said body being in a resiliently flexed condition when received on the at least one post and in a relatively unflexed condition when located off of the at least one post,
said wall presenting longitudinally extending opposite portions that converge toward the slot when the body is in the unflexed condition and are less convergent when the body is in the flexed condition.

[c16] 16. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 1,
said body being formed of a foam material,

said foam material having a Bashore Resiliency Test value of at least about 35.

[c17] 17. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 1,
said body being in a resiliently flexed condition when received on the at least one post and in a relatively unflexed condition when located off of the at least one post,
said wall presenting longitudinally extending opposite portions that converge toward the slot when the body is in the unflexed condition and are less convergent when the body is in the flexed condition.

[c18] 18. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 17,
said body being formed of a foam material,
said foam material having a Bashore Resiliency Test value of at least about 35.

[c19] 19. The soccer goal assembly as claimed in claim 17,
said edges being spaced apart when the body is in the flexed condition, such that the slot is open when the goal pad is received on the at least one post.

[c20] 20. A soccer goal pad for providing impact-cushioning along the generally forward and sideward facing playing surface of a soccer goal post, said goal pad comprising:
an elongated body comprising a wall that presents a generally tubular cross-sectional shape with a central opening in which the goal post is received,
said wall including longitudinally extending generally opposite front and rear portions and a pair of longitudinally extending generally opposite side portions defined between the front and rear portions, with the front and

side portions being dimensioned and configured to overlie the playing surface of the post,

said body presenting a longitudinally extending slot defined between opposed longitudinal edges, with the slot being defined in the rear portion of the wall,

said body being formed of a compressible and resilient material that provides impact-cushioning along the playing surface and permits resilient flexing thereof so that the edges are resiliently separable to receive the post within the slot as the goal pad is installed or removed,

said pad being devoid of structure extending across the slot for securing the edges relative to one another, such that the body is self-retaining on the goal post.

[c21] 21. The soccer goal pad as claimed in claim 20,

said wall having a orthogonal cross-sectional shape, with the front and rear portions being generally parallel to one another and the side portions being generally parallel to one another when the body is received on the post.

[c22] 22. The soccer goal pad as claimed in claim 20,

said wall having a circular cross-sectional shape, such that each of the wall portions consists of approximately a 90° arc of the shape.

[c23] 23. The soccer goal pad as claimed in claim 20,

said wall having a maximum thickness of about 5/8 of an inch.

[c24] 24. The soccer goal pad as claimed in claim 20,

said body being formed of a foam material,

said foam material having a Bashore Resiliency Test value of at least about 35.

[c25] 25. The soccer goal pad as claimed in claim 24,
said body being in a resiliently flexed condition when received on the post and in a relatively unflexed condition when located off of the post,
said side portions of the wall converging rearwardly toward the slot when the body is in the unflexed condition and being less convergent when the body is in the flexed condition.

[c26] 26. The soccer goal pad as claimed in claim 20,
said body being in a resiliently flexed condition when received on the post and in a relatively unflexed condition when located off of the post,
said side portions of the wall converging rearwardly toward the slot when the body is in the unflexed condition and being less convergent when the body is in the flexed condition.

[c27] 27. A goal pad for providing impact-cushioning along the generally forward and sideward facing playing surface of a goal post, said goal pad comprising:
an elongated body comprising a wall that presents a generally tubular cross-sectional shape with a central opening in which the goal post is received,
said body presenting a longitudinally extending slot defined between opposed longitudinal edges,
said body being formed of a compressible and resilient material that provides impact-cushioning along the playing surface and permits resilient flexing thereof so that the edges are resiliently separable to receive the post within the slot as the goal pad is installed or removed,
said body being in a resiliently flexed condition when received on the post and in a relatively unflexed condition when located off of the post,
said wall presenting longitudinally extending opposite wall sections that

converge toward the slot when the body is in the unflexed condition and are less convergent when the body is in the flexed condition.

[c28] 28. The goal pad as claimed in claim 27,
said wall including longitudinally extending generally opposite front and rear portions and a pair of longitudinally extending generally opposite side portions defined between the front and rear portions, with the front and side portions being dimensioned and configured to overlie the playing surface of the post,
said slot being defined in the rear portion of the wall,
said side portions defining the wall sections, such that the side portions converge rearwardly toward the slot.

[c29] 29. The goal pad as claimed in claim 28,
said wall having a orthogonal cross-sectional shape, with the front and rear portions being generally parallel to one another and the side portions being generally parallel to one another when the body is received on the post.

[c30] 30. The goal pad as claimed in claim 28,
said wall having a circular cross-sectional shape, such that each of the wall portions consists of approximately a 90° arc of the shape.

[c31] 31. The goal pad as claimed in claim 27,
said wall having a maximum thickness of about 5/8 of an inch.

[c32] 32. The goal pad as claimed in claim 27,
said body being formed of a foam material,
said foam material having a Bashore Resiliency Test value of at least about 35.

[c33] 33. The goal pad as claimed in claim 27,
said edges being spaced apart when the body is in the flexed condition, such that the slot is open when the body is in the flexed condition.

[c34] 34. The goal pad as claimed in claim 27,
said opposite portions being generally parallel when the body is in the flexed condition.

[c35] 35. A goal pad for providing impact-cushioning along the generally forward and sideward facing playing surface of a goal post, said goal pad comprising:
an elongated body comprising a wall that presents a generally tubular cross-sectional shape with a central opening in which the goal post is received,
said body presenting a longitudinally extending slot defined between opposed longitudinal edges,
said body being formed of a compressible and resilient foam material that provides impact-cushioning along the playing surface and permits resilient flexing thereof so that the edges are resiliently separable to receive the post within the slot as the goal pad is installed or removed,
said foam material having a Bashore Resiliency Test value of at least about 35.

[c36] 36. The goal pad as claimed in claim 35,
said body being in a resiliently flexed condition when received on the post and in a relatively unflexed condition when located off of the post,
said wall presenting longitudinally extending opposite wall sections that converge toward the slot when the body is in the unflexed condition and are less convergent when the body is in the flexed condition.

[c37] 37. The goal pad as claimed in claim 36,
said wall including longitudinally extending generally opposite front and rear portions and a pair of longitudinally extending generally opposite side portions defined between the front and rear portions, with the front and side portions being dimensioned and configured to overlie the playing surface of the post,
said slot being defined in the rear portion of the wall,
said side portions defining the wall sections, such that the side portions converge rearwardly toward the slot.

[c38] 38. The goal pad as claimed in claim 37,
said wall having a orthogonal cross-sectional shape, with the front and rear portions being generally parallel to one another and the side portions being generally parallel to one another when the body is received on the post.

[c39] 39. The goal pad as claimed in claim 37,
said wall having a circular cross-sectional shape, such that each of the wall portions consists of approximately a 90° arc of the shape.

[c40] 40. The goal pad as claimed in claim 36,
said edges being spaced apart when the body is in the flexed condition, such that the slot is open when the body is in the flexed condition.

[c41] 41. The goal pad as claimed in claim 36,
said opposite portions being generally parallel when the body is in the flexed condition.

[c42] 42. The goal pad as claimed in claim 35,
said wall having a maximum thickness of about 5/8 of an inch.

[c43] 43. The goal pad as claimed in claim 35,
said foam material having a Bashore Resiliency Test value of between about 40 and about 52.

[c44] 44. The goal pad as claimed in claim 43,
said foam material comprising an integral skin urethane foam.

[c45] 45. A method of forming a goal pad configured to provide impact-cushioning along the playing surface of a goal post, said goal pad forming method comprising the steps of:
(a) molding a pad preform to an initial preform shape that includes a longitudinally extending slot and a pair of wall sections on opposite sides of the slot; and
(b) after step (a) and before the final cure time, varying the preform shape so that convergence of the wall sections toward the slot is greater than in the initial preform shape,
step (b) including the step of maintaining the varied shape of the preform until the final cure time.

[c46] 46. The goal pad forming method as claimed in claim 45,
step (a) including the step of introducing foam ingredients into a mold.

[c47] 47. The goal pad forming method as claimed in claim 46,
step (a) including the step of mixing the foam ingredients so as to include approximately two parts polyol material and approximately one part isocyonate material.

[c48] 48. The goal pad forming method as claimed in claim 47,
step (a) including the step of filling approximately 25 % of the mold with the foam ingredients.

[c49] 49. The goal pad forming method as claimed in claim 48, step (a) including the step of sealing the mold for approximately six minutes.

[c50] 50. The goal pad forming method as claimed in claim 49, step (a) including the step of maintaining the temperature of the mold to between about 110° and about 115° Fahrenheit.

[c51] 51. The goal pad forming method as claimed in claim 50, step (b) including the steps of removing the preform from the mold and holding preform in the varied shape.

[c52] 52. The goal pad forming method as claimed in claim 51, step (b) including the step of laying the preform on one of the wall sections so that gravity causes the opposite wall section to droop and create the convergence.

[c53] 53. The goal pad forming method as claimed in claim 51, said holding step including the step of placing the preform in ambient conditions for at least about two hours.

[c54] 54. The goal pad forming method as claimed in claim 46, step (b) including the steps of removing the preform from the mold and holding preform in the varied shape.

[c55] 55. The goal pad forming method as claimed in claim 54, step (b) including the step of laying the preform on one of the wall sections so that gravity causes the opposite wall section to droop and create the convergence.

[c56] 56. The goal pad forming method as claimed in claim 54, said holding step including the step of placing the preform in ambient

conditions for at least about two hours.

[c57] 57. The goal pad forming method as claimed in claim 45, step (b) including the step of laying the preform on one of the wall sections so that gravity causes the opposite wall section to droop and create the convergence.

[c58] 58. The goal pad forming method as claimed in claim 45, step (a) including the step of molding the preform so that the initial preform shape has opposite wall sections that are substantially parallel.